

USACHPPM
HEALTH INFORMATION OPERATIONS (HIO) UPDATE

21 November 2003

The HIO Update provides information regarding global medical and veterinary issues of interest to the United States (US) Army. The update does not attempt to analyze the information regarding potential strategic or tactical impact to the US Army and as such, should not be regarded as a medical intelligence product. Medical intelligence products are available at <http://mic.afmic.detrick.army.mil/>. The information in the HIO Update should provide an increased awareness of current and emerging health-related issues.

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HOT TOPICS

Elements of Green Tea Prevent HIV from Binding to Human T Cells

14 November – Science Daily reported the major component of green tea prevents the binding of [HIV](#) to human T cells, the first step in HIV infection, according to a study and an accompanying editorial published in the November 2003 Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology (JACI). Green tea is the nonoxidized, unfermented product of the leaves from the evergreen plant, *Camellia sinensis*. It is made up of catechins, the most abundant of which is Epigallocatechin Gallate (EGCG). It is believed that EGCG is responsible for the vast array of presumed health benefits green tea possesses, such as the prevention of cancer and cardiovascular disease. Several studies have reported that EGCG may also have a protective effect against HIV infection. Kuzushige Kawai, MD, and colleagues from the University of Tokyo demonstrated in laboratory studies that EGCG blocked the binding of HIV envelope glycoprotein to human CD4 molecules on human T cells. The CD4 molecule acts as a binding target for HIV vesicles and plays an important role in the aggressive infection process. Researchers found that EGCG showed a strong affinity for the CD4 molecule, and by binding them, could effectively prevent the binding of the HIV glycoprotein envelope. These findings open new doors for the clinical application of EGCG as a new anti-HIV drug. [View Article](#)

Human Trials Start on Ebola Vaccine

18 November —ABC News reported a volunteer has received the first human inoculation of an experimental vaccine designed to prevent infection by [Ebola](#). Researchers at the Vaccine Research Center of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, one of the National Institutes of Health, administered the vaccine to a volunteer on Tuesday at the NIH clinical center in Bethesda, officials announced. The first human trial comes just three years after researchers from the vaccine center announced that an experimental Ebola vaccine had protected monkeys fully from the usually lethal virus. A part of the experimental vaccine used on monkeys is now being assessed for safety in human volunteers, the NIAID announced. The vaccine is based on DNA technology and is similar to other trial vaccines that may be used to control AIDS, malaria and hepatitis. [View Article](#)

More Playground Deaths Occur at Home than in Public Parks

17 November – American Baby reported a new report shows that over a 10-year period, more deaths to children occurred on backyard playgrounds than on public playgrounds. From 1990 to August 2000, the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) has reports of nearly 150 deaths to children under the age of 15 involving playground equipment; at least 90 of these occurred in a home setting. Almost three-fourths of the deaths in home locations resulted from hangings from ropes, cords, homemade rope swings, and other similar items. New safety standards, aimed at reducing the risk of strangulation, require that ropes be secured at both ends and that makers of home equipment warn

against attaching additional ropes. Playground equipment is also a leading cause of injuries to children. In 1999 alone, it is estimated that there were more than 200,000 playground-equipment injuries, with almost 47,000 injuries on home playgrounds to children under age 15. The proportion of preschool children (younger than age 5) injured on playground equipment was higher on home playgrounds than on playgrounds in general. Almost 40 percent of those injured at home were younger than 5 years, as compared with about 27 percent on other playgrounds. Parents are encouraged to install and maintain protective surfacing, eliminate unsafe ropes, and check for potentially hazardous hooks and edges on swings and slides on home playgrounds. CPSC's study found that only 9 percent of home playgrounds had protective, shock-absorbing surfacing. Dirt and grass, which are the most prevalent surfaces under home playground equipment, do not adequately protect children from serious head injuries. [View Report](#) [View CPSC information and safety tips](#)

Non-Genital Areas May Fuel Repeat Yeast Infections

14 November – Reuters reported the mouth and the region around the anus appear to be two main sources for recurring [yeast infections](#) of the vagina, Swedish researchers report. However, tight clothing, underwear made of synthetic materials and sexual practices do not appear to be related to yeast infections. The authors investigated these factors among 86 women who suffered from recurrent yeast infections. When seen by the researchers, 46 women of the women had a current yeast infection of the vagina. In this group, tests revealed that eight had yeast in their mouth, and 34 had yeast around the anus. In contrast, among the 40 of the women who had no evidence of a current vaginal yeast infection, yeast was detected in the mouths of only three women and around the anus of one other. [View Article](#)

One Skin Cancer Can Beget Other Cancers

17 November – Yahoo Health reported women with a history of nonmelanoma [skin cancer](#) have a greater risk for other cancers, says a U.S. study. The study also found black women who've had nonmelanoma skin cancer have a much greater risk of developing other cancers than white women with a history of nonmelanoma skin cancer. The study, published online Nov. 17, appears in the Jan. 1 issue of *Cancer*. The study was done by a team of researchers led by Dr. Carol A. Rosenberg of Evanston-Northwestern Healthcare and Northwestern University's Feinberg School of Medicine. The study found women with a history of nonmelanoma skin cancer are more than twice as likely to develop other cancers, regardless of ethnicity, age, socioeconomic background, smoking status or other lifestyle factors. It also found black women with a history of nonmelanoma skin cancer were more than seven times more likely to develop a second cancer than other black women. Black women who've had nonmelanoma skin cancer were also at greater risk for a second cancer than white women with nonmelanoma skin cancer. [View Report](#)

Optical Sensors Help Defend Against the Threat from Biological Terrorism.

07 November – Optics reported as scientists search for the best way to detect [biological warfare](#) agents it seems that the answer may lie with laser-induced breakdown spectroscopy (LIBS). The technique, which involves firing laser pulses at a target and analyzing the light spectra that is emitted from the resulting microplasma, is traditionally used for analyzing the composition of metal. Now, research groups from France and the US have demonstrated that LIBS can identify the presence of different strains of bacteria and distinguish them from harmless substances such as pollen. The benefit of the approach is that it is potentially very fast, sensitive and can operate in the field without the need for any sample preparation -- all the requirements of an ideal biohazard detector. A US collaboration from Edgewood Chemical Biological Center and the US Army Research Laboratories used LIBS to analyze biosamples of mold, protein, pollen and bacterial spores deposited on silver substrates. The samples were exposed to single 30 mJ laser pulses from a Q-switched Nd:YAG and

the emitted light was collected by a high-resolution (0.1 nm) broadband (200-980 nm) spectrometer. Principal-component analysis [PCA] software then matched the different optical spectra to the different substances. "The PCA revealed three distinct clusters, which comprised the pollens and ovalbumin [protein] in one cluster, the molds in the second cluster and the bacteria in the third," say the researchers in their paper. "Additional discrimination within the three bacilli types studied appears feasible with a more rigorous approach." [View Article](#)

Small-molecule Inhibitors of Botulinum Neurotoxin Identified

13 November – Eurekalert reported scientists have identified several key molecules that block the activity of a toxin that causes [botulism](#)--an important first step in developing therapeutics to counter the disease. The seven serotypes of BoNT, designated A through G, are among the most lethal biological substances known. Botulinum neurotoxins are composed of two peptide chains, a heavy chain (HC) and a light chain (LC). The heavy chain targets and binds to surface receptors on nerve terminals. The toxins are then internalized into the nerve terminal. Once inside, the light chain separates from the heavy chain and cleaves, or cuts, specific proteins that control neuromuscular function. Cleavage of these proteins effectively blocks the release of neurotransmitters that cause the muscle contractions necessary for respiration. The result is a flaccid paralysis that ultimately leads to suffocation and death. Because botulinum neurotoxins are capable of causing mass casualties, they are classified as biodefense A (top priority) agents by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Currently, no therapeutics exist to counter the threat; thus, identifying and developing compounds that inhibit the neurotoxins is a high priority. [View Article](#)

USEUCOM

Congo Confirms Ebola Outbreak, Toll Rises to 11

16 November – Reuters reported the Congo Republic confirmed a disease that killed 11 people in a remote forest region was caused by the deadly [Ebola](#) virus, which killed 120 people in the same area earlier this year. There is no known cure for Ebola, which is passed on by infected body fluids and kills between 50 and 90 percent of victims depending on the strain. The disease damages the blood vessels and can cause bleeding, diarrhea and shock. Health Minister Alain Moka said the disease had broken out again near Mbomo, some 440 miles north of the central African nation's capital Brazzaville and just across the border from Gabon. Moka said the toll from the outbreak had risen to 11, from the nine deaths he reported on November 7, when he had said Ebola was only the suspected cause of the disease. "It's clearly an Ebola epidemic," Moka told reporters in the capital Brazzaville Saturday. "Laboratory analysis of samples taken from those affected confirm the presence of the Ebola virus," he said. Officials believe the latest outbreak in the Mbomo area started after a group of hunters ate a dead boar they found in the forest. [View Article](#)

Cote d'Ivoire: Boy Dies of Yellow Fever in Northwest

14 November – ProMed reported a 13-year old boy has died of [yellow fever](#) in Kadiasso, a village near Odienne, a town in the rebel-held north of Cote d'Ivoire close to the frontier with Guinea, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) said on Thursday. A crisis committee which includes representatives of the Ministry of Health, the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Committee of the Red Cross, the Pasteur Institute, and ECHO, the aid arm of the European Union, has been formed to deal with the outbreak. It is officially considered to be an epidemic even though no other cases have been reported. The UNICEF doctor said all the 1,600 inhabitants of Kadiasso and 3 neighboring villages had been vaccinated against yellow fever and a further 10,000 more doses of

vaccine were sent to the area on Monday. The crisis committee is investigating whether the outbreak is linked to another 500 km away in Gaoua in the south of Burkina Faso. [View Report](#)

France: Cluster of Typhoid Fever Cases Links to a Sandwich Shop in Paris:

17 November – ProMed reported 5 cases of [typhoid fever](#) were reported in France during October 2003, in patients who had not traveled in typhoid-endemic countries, and who were resident in 4 administrative departments in the Ile de France region (including Paris). The 5 patients were questioned about possible sources of infection during the month preceding the onset of their symptoms. None of the patients had traveled in a typhoid-endemic country. Four of the patients had eaten mixed salads from the same sandwich shop in the 16th district in the west of Paris. Visiting this sandwich shop was the only exposure common to all 4 patients. The 5th patient worked in the 16th district for 1 day each week, and reported occasionally buying sandwiches from different retailers, but could not remember where these retailers were located. Given the rarity of autochthonous cases of typhoid fever in France, the temporal and geographical clustering of these autochthonous cases strongly suggests the sandwich shop visited by at least 4 of the patients to be the source of the infection. The sandwich shop visited by 4 of the 5 cases was closed on 3 Nov 2003, and an enquiry by the local veterinary and health authorities in Paris is underway. [View Report](#)

Meningococcal Meningitis Serogroup A Increases in Moscow

18 November – ProMed reported there has been a rise in the number of cases of [meningococcal meningitis](#) in Moscow. By the end of October 2003, there had been 268 cases (including 22 deaths) mostly in children, approximately twice the average number of cases usually reported. Unusually, many of the cases have been reported at the end of the summer and in early autumn; the usual seasonal increase occurs in February and March. Meningococcal serogroup A has been identified in 90 percent of the strains isolated. The city health authorities in Moscow have initiated a mass vaccination campaign in order to prevent further cases occurring during the coming peak transmission season. [View Report](#)

Outbreak of Legionnaires' Disease in the West of England

17 November – ProMed reported there are 12 confirmed cases [legionnaires' disease](#) in 8 men and 4 women aged from 36 to 76 years (median age 55 years), associated with an outbreak in Hereford, in the west of England, close to the Welsh border. Dates of onset of illness range from 8 Oct to 9 Nov 2003. One 76-year-old man has died. Cooling towers and other aerosol generating equipment are being sampled and treated. An outbreak investigation is underway. Any cases of legionnaires' disease with onset since 1 Oct 2003, in patients who visited Hereford in the 14 days before onset, should be reported to David Kirrage, at +44 (0)1432 344344, and to the Health Protection Agency Communicable Disease Surveillance Center. [View Report](#)

Russia: Hepatitis A Outbreak Among Children in Tver

17 November – ProMed reported a [hepatitis A](#) outbreak has been observed during the past 2 weeks in Tver. Most of those infected are school children. According to the sanitary epidemiological surveillance service, this is a normal occurrence during the autumn-winter season. In Vishevolozkaya School, 8 people were identified simultaneously as infected with hepatitis A. In Krasnoholmskaya district school, 5 cases were observed among schoolchildren and 7 cases in Rameshkovskaya School. Anti-epidemic measures have been set up. Vaccination was carried out on a voluntary basis. [View Report](#)

Russia (Mariy El): Meningitis Outbreak

12 November – ProMed reported 25 people have gotten [bacterial meningitis](#) during the last 9 months of 2003 in Mariy El. This is twice the number of cases for the same period of 2002. Cases of meningitis usually involve children, and this time 21 children have been affected. There were 3 lethal cases. Although the most effective preventive measure against meningitis is vaccination, according to the Mariy El Ministry of Public Health, no vaccine against meningitis is available in Mariy El. In Russia, vaccine is produced only against one type of meningitis, which is not appropriate in Mariy El. [View Report](#)

Russia: Outbreak of Hepatitis A in Schools in Ekaterinburg

14 November – ProMed reported for the past month [hepatitis A](#) cases were recorded in almost every district of Ekaterinburg. School N 114 in Ekaterinburg was closed for quarantine because 4 children were infected simultaneously with hepatitis A. This week 4 cases were also registered in school N 40 and 3 cases in school N 92. At schools where cases were identified, physicians are implementing epidemic prevention activities, such as regular inspection of schoolchildren, disinfections, etc. District-wide vaccinations are planned. Doctors are claiming that there are no large outbreaks of hepatitis in schools, but accept that the situation is serious. According to physicians the rise in the incidence is explained by the cyclic nature of the infection: every 5 to 6 years. Mass vaccination is not feasible because of the cost. [View Report](#)

Russia: Seasonal Increase in Hemorrhagic Fever in Ulyanovsk

18 November – ProMed reported in Ulyanovsk there has been a marked increase in the number of cases of [Hantavirus infection](#). According to the Sanitary Epidemiological Surveillance Center, 17 people were admitted to the hospital at the beginning of November with the symptoms of this disease, whereas only 18 cases had been reported during the whole year up to that time. According to health specialists, this is the normal pattern, and they predicted that an increased number of cases would be observed until the end of December. [View Report](#)

USCENTCOM

Iraqis to Face Bad Health for Decades - Report

11 November – Reuters reported Iraqis will suffer physical and mental illnesses for "years, maybe generations" due to poor living conditions, ongoing violence and a collapsed health service, according to a medical charity report. The report on Tuesday by UK-based charity Medact said 20,000 civilians were injured during the war and its aftermath to July. It said the breakdown in law and order, lack of security and damage to infrastructure were hitting vulnerable groups like women and children. "Limited access to clean water and sanitation, poverty, malnutrition, and disruption of public services including health services continue to have a negative impact on the health of the Iraqi people," said the report's author Dr Sabya Farooq. The report said the problems were compounded by widespread contamination. "The environment is littered by mines and they are killing humans. A lot of unexploded bomblets are continuing to injure civilians, particularly children because they are brightly colored," Farooq said. [View Article](#)

Typhoid Hits More People in Tajikistan

18 November – ProMed reported more than 1000 people were hospitalized in Tajikistan's capital Dushanbe with a diagnosis of [typhoid](#). This data came from Ministry of Public Health and Sanitary Surveillance Center. Health officials are concerned that the typhoid outbreak could grow into an epidemic. The outbreak has also now observed in the part of Tajikistan that borders Afghanistan. It is estimated that 2000 have been hospitalized with a preliminary diagnosis of typhoid country-wide. [View Report](#)

USNORTHCOM

Alaska: Salmonella Confirmed at Kodiak School

14 November – ProMed reported 4 cases of [salmonella](#) connected to a lunch served at a private school have been confirmed by the Alaska Division of Public Health. The 4 were among 48 people sickened after eating at Kodiak Christian School on 31 Oct 2003. Although health and school officials believe they have pinpointed the event at which the *salmonella* spread (an International Day potluck lunch) they do not know the direct source of the bacteria. The bacteria could already have been in a food or contaminated by handling, said principal Donna Schmelzenbach. "We have no way of knowing (the source) unless the food comes back positive," Schmelzenbach said. Even then the cause may not be determined. There were few items at the lunch that are typically associated with *salmonella*, she said. There was no dish with eggs, except sugar cookies, which appeared properly baked, she said. Schmelzenbach said other people around town may have salmonellosis but may not recognize it. [View Report](#)

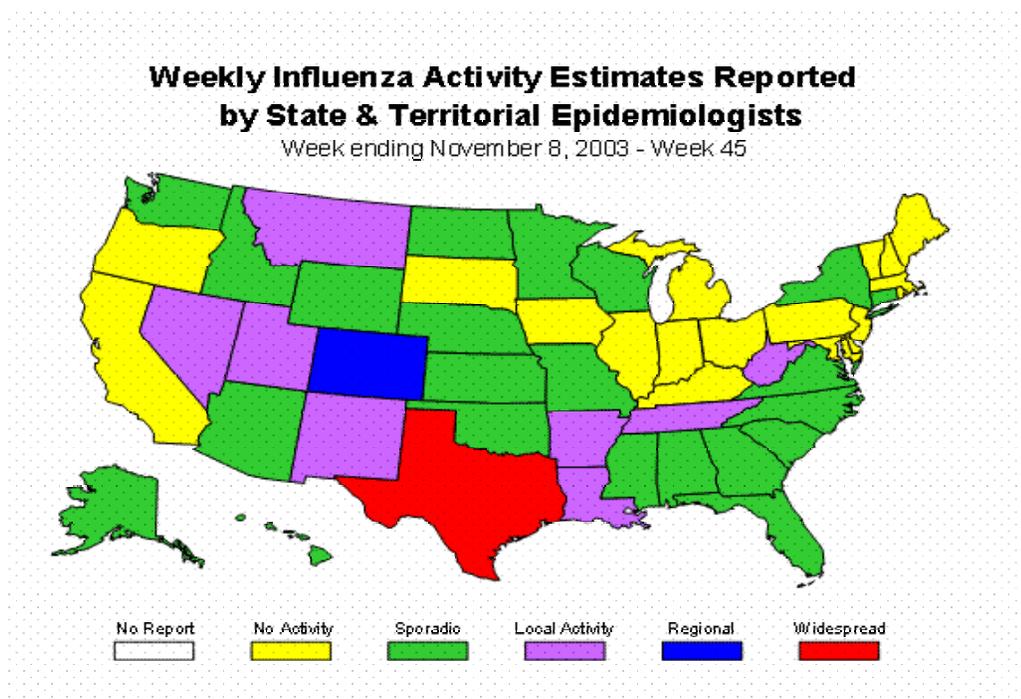
CDC Sounds Alarms on Flu Outbreak, Urges Flu Shots

17 November – Reuters reported warning that an earlier-than-usual [influenza](#) outbreak could foreshadow a severe flu season, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control urged Americans to get a vaccine to guard against infection. "We're very concerned that the flu season has had an earlier onset than we've seen in many years, and we are seeing some parts of the country that are having very high levels of widespread flu infection," said CDC Director Dr. Julie Gerberding. She said influenza was particularly widespread in Texas and that Colorado had also been hard hit. Gerberding said that the Atlanta-based CDC also was concerned about a new strain of flu that does not match the strain in the current vaccine. But she said the vaccine would still provide some protection against the viral infection. [View Article](#)

CDC to Grade States' Bioterror Plans"

06 November – The New York Times reported the government soon will begin grading how well states are prepared for [bioterrorism](#) and other health emergencies, including how many could immediately open mass-vaccination clinics if a single case of smallpox occurred anywhere in the world. Exactly how to measure public health preparedness is still being worked out, although the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention hope to test a scoring system in January and to have full-fledged evaluations under way next summer. [View Article](#)

CDC Weekly Influenza Activity Estimate



Nevada: Plague Found in Animals

12 November – ProMed reported if you intend to visit Mount Charleston, NV you'll need to take some precautions. A [plague](#) warning is in effect there. Four gray foxes that were trapped in Mount Charleston tested positive for plague. The disease is transmitted to people through a fleabite or direct contact with an infected animal. Health officials say if you're visiting Mount Charleston you should wear long-sleeved shirts and pants and stay away from rodents and wild animals. Residents who live in the area are already taking precautions. Health officials say if you take your pet up to Mount Charleston, don't let them wander and keep a flea collar on them. If a human were to contract it, if it's detected early, plague responds well to antibiotics. [View Report](#)

Pennsylvania: Beaver County Hepatitis Probe Changes Focus

13 November – ProMed reported health officials now believe that contaminated food delivered to a Beaver County restaurant is a more likely cause of the ongoing [hepatitis A](#) outbreak than poor worker hygiene as originally suspected. Investigators are also considering whether the problem at the Chi-Chi's restaurant at Beaver Valley Mall is related to recent hepatitis A outbreaks in Georgia and Tennessee, which are being blamed on contaminated green onions. The number of cases, has affected over 500 and has killed 3 people forced investigators to reconsider the worker-hygiene theory, said Richard McGarvey, spokesman for the state Department of Health. The new thinking also coincided with the arrival of investigators from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which investigated the outbreaks in the other states. In Georgia, about 250 people came down with hepatitis A in September and October 2003 after eating at about 12 restaurants in the central and northern parts of the state. In Knoxville, Tennessee, 80 people became ill with hepatitis A in September after eating at one city restaurant. Contaminated green onions are the prime suspects in both states. McGarvey cautioned that investigators have not concluded that green onions are the prime suspect here. Consumers are being advised to fully cook their green onions as a precaution however. [View Report](#) [View Report 2](#)

Shortage of Nurses, Hospital Beds Foreseen in U.S.

12 November – Reuters reported contrary to reports in the mid-1990s that the U.S. is likely to have an excess of hospital beds, a new study suggests that demand generated by aging "baby boomers" could well lead to too few beds. At the same time, a second study released Wednesday finds that while the long-standing shortage of nurses eased dramatically in 2002, the nation is likely to be short of nurses for the foreseeable future. The studies are published in the November/December issue of the policy journal Health Affairs. Spending on hospital care could grow by as much as 75 percent by 2012, Stuart Altman of Brandeis University told a briefing sponsored by the Federation of American Hospitals. Such an increase in demand, said Altman, could result in a need for as many as 200,000 new hospital beds. [View Article](#)

Virginia: First Human Death Associated with Raccoon Rabies

14 November – The CDC MMWR reported on the first human death associated with raccoon [rabies](#) in Virginia in 2003. The report summarizes the investigation of the first documented case of human rabies associated with a raccoon rabies virus variant in the United States and highlights the importance of continued education in the prevention and diagnosis of rabies. [View the Report](#)

Washington: Death of Student from Hantavirus in Skagit County

14 November – ProMed reported the death of a community college soccer player here marks the first known case of [Hantavirus infection](#) in Skagit County. A 21-year-old student at Skagit Valley College died a week ago, just days after he was taken to a hospital for vomiting and diarrhea. State Health Department tests confirmed the presence of hantavirus, said Peter Browning, director of the Skagit County Health Department. County health department investigators hope to identify where the individual may have been exposed to the virus. [View Report](#)

USPACOM

Australia: Dengue Fever Update

13 November – ProMed reported Queensland health officials are preparing for more cases of [dengue fever](#), following an outbreak in the Torres Strait; 2 Yam Island women are critically ill in a Cairns hospital with symptoms of hemorrhagic fever, a potentially fatal form of the disease. Health authorities are trying to stop the outbreak from spreading to Thursday Island and the North Queensland mainland before the wet season sets in. Dr Jeffrey Hanna from the North Queensland Tropical Public Health Unit has just returned from the Torres Strait. Yam Island has been cleansed of the offending mosquito, but 18 people have tested positive for dengue and many more people are awaiting results of blood tests. Australia hasn't seen cases this severe for a century and health authorities are trying hard to stop it spreading. [View Report](#)

Beijing: Children's Hospital Receiving 1000 Pediatric Diarrhea Cases Daily

12 November – ProMed reported over the past 2 weeks, the clinic of Children's Hospital has seen about 1000 pediatric [diarrhea](#) patients each day. What is even more unusual is that this year's diarrhea virus comes on more ferociously than in the past and the illness quickly worsens. Children's Hospital will hold an urgent training session for medical personnel to discuss prevention and treatment of this diarrheal virus. Dr. Fan of the Internal Medicine Department stated that pediatric diarrhea is a

commonly seen ailment. Normally, peak occurrence is from November to December. This year, because the temperature dropped quickly, the diarrhea virus came early. At the end of October, cases of the virus started to appear one after the other. Based on an evaluation of clinical symptoms of the diarrhea, there is a high probability that this is a new virus. Normally it takes 5 days after diarrhea appears in small children for dehydration, diabetic ketoacidosis (DKA), and other critical conditions to set in. This year children are experiencing dehydration one to 2 days after diarrhea appears, and the disease progresses swiftly and violently. [View Report](#)

China (Hunan and Hubei): Food Poisoning in Children

14 November – ProMed reported a total of 3 school children have died and 46 others have fallen ill in 2 separate food poisoning cases in Central China recently, according to local police. In the 1st case, a farmer from Nanjiang town in Pingjiang county of Hunan allegedly went to Daxing and Simei primary schools in the county and gave poisoned popcorn and citrus to a fifth-grade student of Daxing School, and to a second-grade student of Simei School. He allegedly told them to share the treats with fellow pupils. After they ate the poisonous food, 27 schoolchildren immediately fell sick and were sent to the hospital. However, the 5th grade student from Daxing School and another student from Simei School died on the way to hospital. The suspect allegedly tried to escape by bus but was stopped by the police. They said the suspect attempted to commit suicide by drinking poison. He collapsed when caught and was rushed to a local hospital. The police said the motives for the poisoning were not yet known. In the other food poisoning case in Hubei, a total of 22 students fell ill on Tuesday night after they had their supper in the dining hall of the Nigou Central Elementary School in Jingyang town. The school immediately sent the poisoned students to a local hospital. A 5th-grade student died on Wednesday morning of respiratory failure. According to the school authorities, the girl was very weak due to diarrhea and stomach trouble before the poisoning. The local government said the cause of the poisoning was likely moldy corn in the food, and authorities were still investigating the case. [View Report](#) [View Report 2](#)

China (Jiangsu): Intentional Food Poisoning

15 November – ProMed reported Food laced with rat poison killed one and sent 24 to the hospital during a wedding party in east China's Jiangsu province, state media said on Friday. The mass poisoning happened on Thursday in Sihong county, as several guests started feeling sick shortly after the wedding banquet had started, the Xinhua news agency reported. One died on the way to hospital, and another remained in critical condition on Friday, according to the agency. Police are investigating after it was determined the culprit was a particularly dangerous brand of rat poison which is now banned throughout China. [View Report](#)

China: Rabies Kills 312 People in Guangxi

12 November – ProMed reported [rabies](#) has killed 312 people in the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region in the south from January to September 2003, a 152.9 percent rise over the total rabies cases in 2002, according to the Regional Department of Health. The figures show the impact of the growing number of pets in the country, which has long been ravaged by infectious diseases. Local medical experts blamed the public's lack of awareness of the need for vigilance and the low canine vaccination rate as the major causes of the high number of cases of the deadly infection. [View Report](#)

China: Suspected Viral Diarrhea Affects 2 Primary Schools in Guangzhou

12 November – ProMed reported Guangzhou Municipal Health Bureau has reported that over the past 2 weeks there have been numerous outbreaks of food poisoning in Guangzhou. Among these there

have been suspected [viral diarrhea](#) outbreaks at 2 primary schools. Most patients were young pupils. The infection was spread primarily through water and food and secondarily through person to person contact. The Guangzhou Disease Control Center stated that according to the results of their survey, the intestinal virus causing this type of diarrhea has never before appeared in Guangzhou. However, the Disease Control Center is in the process of identifying the virus. [View Report](#) [View Report 2](#)

Dengue Fever Update for Bangladesh and India

13 November – Promed reported in Bangladesh, [dengue fever](#) is back in the port city, already claiming one life and attacking many more, after a major outbreak about 2 years ago. Sultanul Alam said dengue spread with the proliferation of *Aedes* mosquitoes following recent rains in the city. Spraying of insecticides at breeding grounds for mosquitoes will be geared up. In India, From 1 Jun to 9 Nov 2003, 2185 laboratory-confirmed cases of dengue fever have been reported in Delhi and surrounding areas. Additional information is being sought to identify possible cases of dengue hemorrhagic fever. Circulating dengue virus serotypes DEN-3 and 2 have been reported to be associated with this outbreak. The outbreak is ongoing and vector control measures have been intensified. Dengue continues to stalk Maharashtra, with 175 persons affected so far. 5 deaths have been reported from the city, while Pimpri-Chinchwad registered 3. [View Report](#)

Hong Kong: Norovirus Implicated in Primary School Gastroenteritis Outbreak

14 November – ProMed reported the Department of Health (DH) is investigating a gastroenteritis outbreak which affected some 150 students of a primary school. DH staff visited the school in Central and Western District on 13 and 14 Nov 2003. Investigations revealed that the sick students suffered from vomiting, diarrhea and abdominal pain. Two of them are admitted to hospital in stable condition, while the others are resting at home. DH is contacting the students and parents to ascertain their symptoms and collect stool samples. A stool sample from a sick student already tested positive for [norovirus](#). Following the gastroenteritis outbreak, DH staff provided the school concerned with health advice on viral gastroenteritis and the proper disinfection procedures. The school management carried out thorough disinfection in the premises under the supervision of DH. All schools were also reminded of the precautionary measures to take in preventing viral gastroenteritis in institutional settings. [View Report](#)

India AIDS Cases at 4.5 Million

13 November – CBS News reported the [AIDS](#) virus is being spread through India's general population mainly by married men, who have unprotected sex with prostitutes, according to a study. About 610,000 Indians contracted HIV last year, increasing the overall number of infected Indians to about 4.5 million, said the study funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. That is the second-highest total in the world after South Africa. In four of the six most affected states, the virus was contracted by businessmen, men in the service sector and hotel employees, said the study, which used federal and state government data. "The spread from the high-risk behavior groups to the general populace is another key indicator that HIV/AIDS in India has reached epidemic proportions," the study said. Sex workers' clients, "particularly married males, act as the bridge groups aiding (the spread) ... into the general population." [View Article](#)

USSOUTHCOM

Dominican Republic: Dengue Fever Update

13 November – ProMed reported at least 73 people have died of hemorrhagic [dengue fever](#) this year [2003], according to the national epidemiology institute. Director Luis Lara said that although the cases still need to be investigated in order to confirm the cause of death, the mortality rate seemed high. He felt the number of cases and consequent deaths to be "worrying, but not alarming," and advised people to be watchful for symptoms, which include fever, aching head and body, bleeding gums and nosebleeds, and blood in vomit. Anyone displaying such symptoms should be hospitalized immediately, said Lara. He described the situation as an outbreak rather than an epidemic. This year [2003] 4430 cases of dengue fever have been reported in total -- twice as many as in 2002. The reported cases of hemorrhagic dengue have also risen, from 78 last year to 189 so far in 2003. [View Report](#)

Jamaica: Outbreak of Severe Rotavirus Gastroenteritis Among Children

14 November – The CDC MMWR reported in late May 2003, the Jamaican Ministry of Health (MoH) identified a sharp increase in the number of acute gastroenteritis (AGE) cases reported throughout the country, accompanied by increases in AGE-associated hospital admissions and deaths among children. The greatest increase in AGE cases was observed among children aged <5 years in the southeastern parish of Kingston and St. Andrew. During June--July, 12 AGE-associated deaths were reported among children aged <8 years. MoH began an investigation to determine the etiology of the outbreak, ascertain risk factors for illness and death, and identify appropriate control measures. A report that presents the preliminary results of that investigation, which determined that the AGE cases were associated with [rotavirus](#), and deaths might have been reduced by appropriate AGE case management, indicating a need for additional education of caregivers regarding AGE treatment can be viewed [here](#).

Update on Yellow Fever in the Americas

15 November – ProMed reported from 9 Oct - 1 Nov 2003, 12 new laboratory-confirmed cases of [Yellow fever](#) were reported to the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO). The total number of cumulative cases for this year [2003] is 221, with 96 deaths. Bolivia reported 6 cases and 4 deaths, Brazil reported 62 cases and 23 deaths, Colombia reported 97 cases and 42 deaths, Peru reported 22 cases and 13 deaths and Venezuela reported 34 cases and 14 deaths. This is the greatest number of cases reported in the Region since 1998. Venezuela has been the country reporting an increase of the number of cases (6), with the recent outbreak in the district of Guaranito, state of Portuguesa. Review of the data from Colombia has generated 6 additional cases to be included in this update, despite the fact that they are not of recent appearance. The countries continue to intensify surveillance and promote vaccination of all residents in the affected areas. [View Report](#)

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